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ABSTRACT

Designed for junior high and high school students and their parents, this brochure explains the structure, function, and method for interpretation of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress. A question and answer format is used to provide information on scope and purposes of the tests, meaning and accuracy of the scores, and relationship of the scores to the Austin (Texas) Independent School District graduation and minimum competency requirements. Sources for further information are also provided. This brochure was submitted to the 1983 American Educational Research Association Division H competition as a best study report brochure. (LP)

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YOUR SCORES IN BASIC SKILLS:

IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS. AISD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

AISD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

Austin Independent School District
Texas

1982

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Your Scores In . . .

AISD Junior High Schools

School Year 1981-82

You recently took the IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS (ITBS). This brochure is to help you and your parents understand more about why you were given this test and what your scores mean. If you have questions about your test scores that this brochure does not answer, please ask your teachers or your school counselor. They will be happy to talk to you about your test scores.

YOU TOOK THESE ITBS TESTS:	SKILLS TESTED:
Vocabulary	Your knowledge of the meaning of words.
Reading Comprehension	Your understanding of what you have read.
Language Skills Spelling Capitalization Punctuation Usage	Your ability to recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.
Work-Study Skills Visual Materials Reference Materials	Your ability to interpret charts, maps, and graphs, and to use reference materials.
Mathematics Math Concepts Math Problems Math Computation	Your understanding of mathematical theory and your ability to do all types of problems.

WHY WERE YOU TESTED?

When we want to know how we are doing in anything, we usually find something to compare ourselves to — runners in training for the Olympics might compare their practice efforts to world record time; dieters might use a chart giving recommended weights for individuals of the same sex and height. Testing is one way for you, your teachers, and your parents to know how you are doing in school. The ITBS is given to students across the country. Your scores then help you know how you are doing in acquiring basic skills in comparison to students across the country.

Your test scores will be used to make decisions about which reading, math, and language arts classes would be best for you to take. For eighth graders, these scores may mean that you have met AISD's high school graduation minimum competency requirements.

Your ITBS scores also help the principal know more about how all the students in your school are achieving. Other administrators and the School Board use the scores to help them understand the achievement levels of students in AISD as a whole.

HOW ACCURATE ARE THESE TEST SCORES?

In most cases, these test scores are a good estimation of how you perform in school. But these scores only estimate how well you have learned the skills tested. They can be affected by a number of things, such as which courses you have taken and how you were feeling on the day you took the test.

Test scores are one piece of information which you, your teachers, and your parents should use to judge your school progress. Many other things should also be used to measure your success in school, such as your grades, your enthusiasm for courses, and how well you can use skills you have learned.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION MINIMUM COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

This section of the brochure explains the high school graduation requirements which affect you. **PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.** If you have questions not answered by the information provided here, talk to your school counselor.

AISD HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION MINIMUM COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

AISD has a number of requirements students must meet before they can graduate from high school. In addition to earning the required number of units of credit and passing the required courses, two of these requirements involve your ITBS scores.

Reading: **Students will be required to demonstrate at least a ninth-grade competence in reading or place on file a letter signed by parent or guardian acknowledging that the student proposes to graduate without achieving a ninth-grade level in reading.**

Mathematics: **Students will be required to demonstrate at least a ninth-grade competence in mathematics or place on file a letter signed by parent or guardian acknowledging that the student proposes to graduate without achieving a ninth-grade competence in mathematics.**

AISD Board Policy 5127

HOW CAN YOU MEET THESE TWO MINIMUM COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS?

The first chance you have to meet these competency requirements is in the eighth grade. If you are an eighth grader and your raw score for the Reading Total is at least 61 and your Math Total raw score is at least 67 you have already met the competency requirements.

IF YOU DO NOT MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS IN EIGHTH GRADE, WHAT THEN?

You can also meet these requirements in high school by making an average ninth-grade score on the high school achievement test given every year. There are special high school courses you can take to help you meet these requirements if you have not met them by the time you have taken your required language arts and math courses. Your school counselor can tell you more about these courses.

If you have not met the minimum competency requirements by the end of the twelfth grade, you may stay in school until you do meet them, or you may request that your parents or guardian give permission for you to graduate without meeting them.

WHY DOES AISD HAVE THESE REQUIREMENTS?

The minimum competency requirements were begun to make certain that every student who graduates from an AISD school has the minimum skills necessary to function in our society.

These requirements are the minimum requirements in reading and math. Every student is still expected to learn as much as possible. Most students will far exceed these minimum levels.

WHAT DO YOUR SCORES MEAN?

You will find your ITBS scores on the bottom of the next page. There are 15 scores in all for junior high students. These include the totals for reading, language skills, work-study skills, and mathematics.

The ITBS is a standardized test. This means that each student who takes the test receives the same directions and the same time limits. Because we know that it is standardized, we can make estimates about how AISD students who took the test compare with students across the country in the nationwide reference group.

For example, you can see that Susan Jones got a raw score of 30 on the Vocabulary Test and a percentile rank score of 59. The **RAW SCORE** tells *how many items Susan got correct* on the Vocabulary Test. Susan's **PERCENTILE RANK SCORE** of 59 means that *she scored higher on the Vocabulary Test than 59% of the students in Susan's grade* who were part of the nationwide reference group. This reference group is thousands of students who took the ITBS in 1978 in each grade level from all areas of the country. Therefore, for every 100 students in the nationwide group, *Susan's raw score was higher than 59 of them.*

For each grade level, *a percentile rank score of 50 is the middle score* for all the students in the nationwide reference group. The highest possible percentile rank score is 99; the lowest is 1.

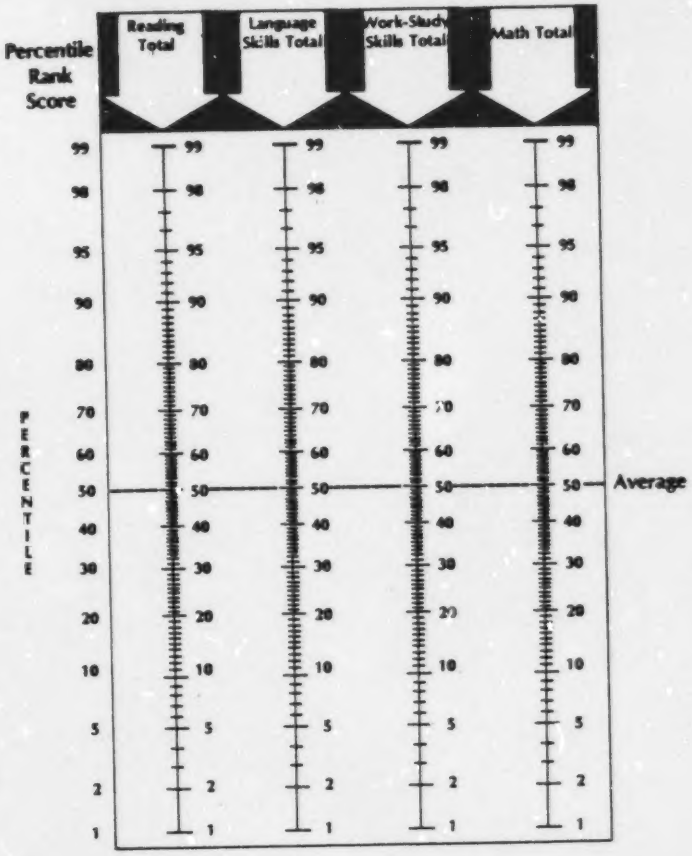
Susan's mathematics scores are marked with an "S" in the row labeled **SPECIAL CODES.** This S means that Susan's teacher noticed something during the mathematics testing period which made her think Susan's scores may not be accurate. In this case, Susan lost her contacts during the mathematics tests and could not read them. The school counselor has a record of all teachers' reasons for thinking any scores may be inaccurate.

STUDENT NUMBER	STUDENT NAME												SCH. NO.	DATE	LEVEL	FORM	GRADE
4562103	Susan Jones												252	2/82	14	7	8
ITBS	GRADES 1 & 2 ONLY: WORD ANALYSIS	VOCABULARY	READING COMPREHENSION	READING TOTAL	SPELLING	CAPITALIZATION	PUNCTUATION	USAGE	LANGUAGE SKILLS TOTAL	VISUAL MATERIALS	REFERENCE MATERIALS	ALPHABETIZING SKILLS TOTAL	MATH CONCEPTS	MATH PROBLEMS	MATH COMPUTATION	MATH TOTAL
RAW SCORE	—	30	32	62	27	22	18	18	85	22	32	54	6	6	10	22
PERCENTILE RANK SCORE	—	59	58	55	46	79	52	49	57	56	62	58	1	5	5	1
SPECIAL CODES													S	S	S	S

S = Special Circumstance + = Tested Upward * = Tested Downward

+ * These are applicable only in grades 4-6.

YOUR SCORES ON THE IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS



PASTE YOUR SCORES HERE

YOU MAY WISH TO GRAPH YOUR TEST SCORES ON THE GRAPH ABOVE.

Sequential Tests of Educational Progress

Your Scores In . . .

BASIC SKILLS

READING • WRITING • MATH • SCIENCE

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
TEXAS

AISD Senior High Schools
School Year 1981-82

9

WHAT TESTS DID YOU TAKE?

You took the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP), Series II. These same tests have been given to thousands of high school students across the United States.

Each year, AISD high school students take one of two forms of the STEP designed to measure the same skills. The form that you took, either Form A or Form B, is indicated on your STEP score label on page 6.

The STEP tests were given in a standardized way. This means that everyone in the country who took these tests had the same time limits and the same instructions.

WHAT SUBJECTS WERE ON THE STEP?

This year the STEP sections on Reading, Science, Mechanics of Writing, Math Computation, and Math Basic Concepts were given. Your understanding of the material you read and your ability to apply that information to problems were tested. The areas of English Expression and Social Studies will be tested next year instead of Mechanics of Writing and Science.

WHY WERE YOU TESTED?

Testing is one way to get information about your strengths and weaknesses in scholastic skills. Austin ISD uses these scores as a way of informing you and your parents about how you stand in these areas. The scores are also used by your school to set school goals, to decide which courses will be offered, and to determine what will be stressed in those courses. The scores of all the high school students in the District are used by the School Board to make decisions about districtwide goals and curriculum.

HOW ACCURATE ARE THESE TEST SCORES?

On the whole, standardized tests provide a good estimate of your achievement in school. But standardized test scores are only **one** kind of information which you, your parents, and your teachers should use to judge your academic progress. Grades, enthusiasm for certain courses, and many other things should also be used to judge your work at school.

These scores are an **estimate** of how well you have learned certain skills. Your scores may have been affected by which courses you have taken, how much you read at home, how seriously you took these tests, or even the way you felt on the days the tests were given.

WHERE CAN YOU GO IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE SCORES?

If you want more information about your scores, you can talk to your teachers and your school counselor. They can help you understand your STEP scores and think about ways you might be able to improve your scores next year.

WHAT ABOUT THE MINIMUM COMPETENCY FOR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS?

AISD has minimum competency requirements which must be met in reading and math prior to graduation. Until May, 1982, all students have to demonstrate an eighth-grade competency in those subjects in order to graduate. The School Board has revised these requirements to state that students who will graduate in 1983 or thereafter must demonstrate a ninth-grade level of competency in reading and math.

The following guidelines determine the level of competency that each student must meet in order to graduate:

1. All students who had earned 10 or more units of credit as of August, 1980, must demonstrate competency at the eighth-grade level.
2. All students who had fewer than 10 units of credit as of August, 1980, are required to demonstrate competency at the ninth-grade level.

If you are not sure which level applies to you, your school counselor has this information.

WHY DOES AISD HAVE THESE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS?

In the past, some Austin ISD seniors have graduated from high school without being able to read or use math very well. These MINIMUM levels were established to improve the basic skills of AISD high school graduates. Every student is expected to learn as much as possible, and most students will far exceed these minimum levels.

HOW CAN YOU MEET THE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS?

You only have to meet the competency requirements once during grades 8-12 to graduate from high school. You can meet the requirements by making the necessary scores on one of the following tests:

1. The California Achievement Tests (CAT) (prior to 1980) *or* the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) (beginning in 1980), given at the end of grade 8.
2. The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP), given at the end of grades 9-12. The raw scores necessary to meet the requirements for each level (8th or 9th grade) are shown in the table at the bottom of page 5.

3. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), given periodically to high school students who have not yet met the requirements.
4. The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS), given in grade 9.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE NOT MET THE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS YET?

Special reading and math courses are required for students who have not met the competency requirements when they enter the eleventh grade. You can take these courses over as many times as you need to in order to meet the requirements. If you reach the end of your senior year and you still have not met the competency requirements, one thing you can do is stay in school until you **do** meet them. A final option is to have your parents or guardian sign a letter giving permission for you to graduate without meeting these minimum requirements. You will probably want to discuss these options with your counselor.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO GRADUATE?

All other requirements for high school graduation must still be met (pass 21 units, take all the required courses, etc.). If you are not sure whether you have met the competency requirements, or any other requirement for graduation from high school, talk to your school counselor.

WHAT SCORES ARE REPORTED?

You will find your scores at the bottom of page 6. There are two types of scores reported: **percentile rank scores** and **raw scores.** The **percentile rank scores** compare your performance on these tests with a nationwide group of students who serve as a reference group. Your scores are compared only to students who were in the same grade as you when they took the test. For each grade level, a percentile rank score of 50 is the middle score for all students in each of the nationwide reference groups who took the tests. The highest possible percentile rank score is 99, and the lowest is 1. The **raw score** is the number of items that you answered correctly.

For the first time this school year, you are being provided with two sets of percentile rank scores representing how well you did on the STEP. Two nationwide groups of students took the STEP. Your 1970 percentile rank scores show how you compare with the group of students tested in 1970. Your 1978 percentile rank scores show how you compare with the group of students tested in 1978. The students tested in 1978 did not take the Science Test so there are no 1978 percentile rank scores for this test. Before this year, AISD had only reported the percentile rank scores based on the 1970 nationwide group.

WHAT DO YOUR SCORES MEAN?

The example on this page is given to show how to read your scores. In the example, Susan Jones made a 1970 percentile rank score of 61 in reading. This means that her reading score was the same as or higher than 61 percent of all the tenth-grade students in the 1970 nationwide reference group. In other words, Susan scored lower than 39 percent of these students. Her 1978 percentile rank score for Reading was 63. This means that her score was the same as or higher than 63 percent of all the tenth-grade students in the 1978 reference group. Susan scored lower than 37 percent of these 1978 students.

The asterisks (*) by Susan's Math Computation scores mean that her teacher noticed something during the testing period that made him think Susan's score on this section of the test may be inaccurate. For example, in this case, Susan lost her contacts during the math test and had trouble reading the questions. The school counselor has a record of all teachers' reasons for thinking any scores are invalid.

		Reading	Mechanics of Writing	Science	Math Computation	Math Basic Concepts
Percentile Rank Score	1970:	61	72	59	32*	49
	1978:	63	92	--	58*	59

Reading Raw Score: 39

Math Total Raw Score: 50

Jones Susan J.
Jackson High School
*Possibly invalid score

Grade 10

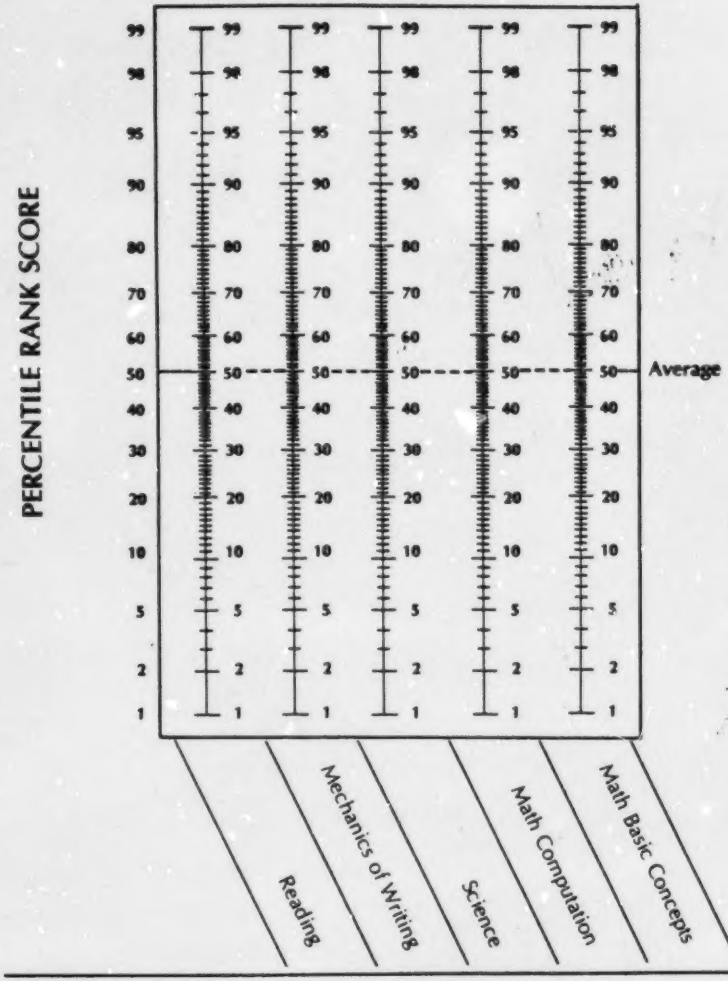
April, 1982
Form B

Raw scores required to meet graduation competency requirements on the STEP:

	8th Grade Level (for 1982 Graduates)		9th Grade Level (for All Others)	
	Reading Raw Score	Math Total Raw Score	Reading Raw Score	Math Total Raw Score
Form A:	28	46	30	49
Form B:	28	48	30	51

(Your STEP score label on the next page indicates which form of the tests you took.)

Your Scores on the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP)



APPLY SCORE LABEL HERE

If you wish, you can mark these scores on the chart above.